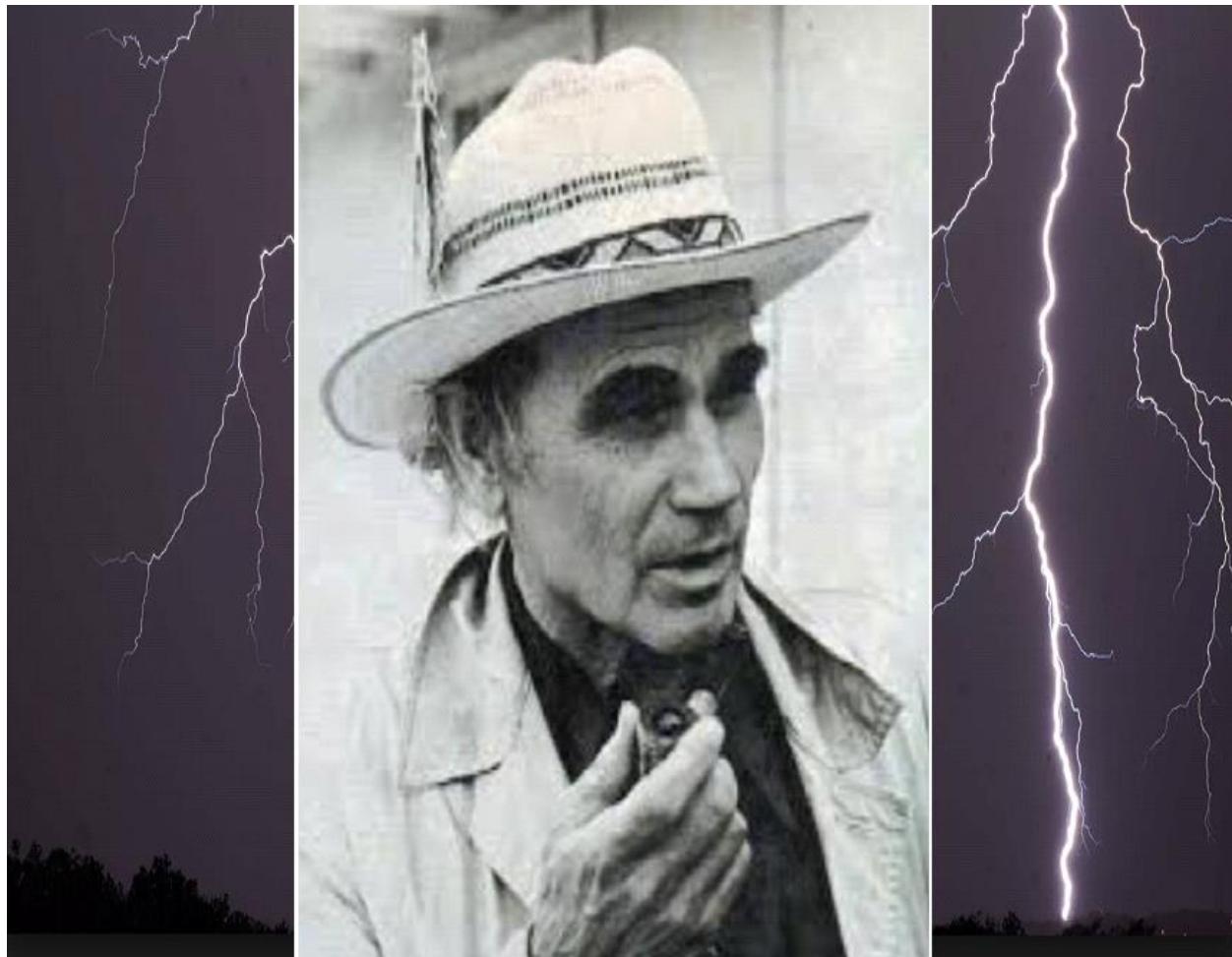


# BETWEEN THE LIGHTNING AND THE THUNDER *(my story)*

by ShaHaWin Lightfoot



*A contribution to the Rolling Thunder series...  
"Listen to the Thunder... I'm still here!"*

## **BETWEEN THE LIGHTNING AND THE THUNDER (*my story*)**

My story of Rolling Thunder, begins in Elko, Nevada. My name is Marguerita, also known as "ShaHaWin". I was born in Elko, in 1961.

My mother, Barbara "Nawassa Lightfoot", had moved from Lamoille, Nevada, by the Ruby Mountains, to Elko, which saved her a 25-minute car ride back and forth to work.



***Barbara "Nawassa Lightfoot"***

In the 1960s, the Elko economy was pretty grim at times, especially in the winter when tourists stopped coming; so people had to depend on each other.



***Elko, Nevada***

Elko's economy at one time was based heavily on gold mining, with ranching and tourism providing additional jobs. The city was at one time, considered the capital of Nevada's gold belt.

The state of Nevada has produced more gold than all but four countries, and most of the gold from Nevada was mined in Carlin, Nevada.



***Carlin-Tunnel, northeast Nevada***

Elko at that time was a small community with a few stores, a courthouse and people who wanted to help build Elko into what it is today. The federal government owns 90% of the land there.

Originally, Elko was served by two train depots along two separate lines that ran through the downtown area. These two lines operated in a directional-running setup, westbound trains used the Southern Pacific

Railroad (SP) depot was located at 684 Railroad Street. Eastbound trains used the Western Pacific Railroad (WP) depot at the corner of 3rd Street and Silver Street. There were no services provided at these stations [e.g., ticketing, restrooms, lounge, etc.]

Anschutz Corp., owner of Denver & Rio Grande Western, purchased Southern Pacific on August 8, 1988. It retained Southern Pacific Lines as a system name, until it merged with Union Pacific, which is the largest railroad company in the United States as of 2010.



**Union Pacific train**

Carlin (*Nevada*) is a small city located near the western border of Elko County in northeast Nevada, 23 miles west of the city of Elko.



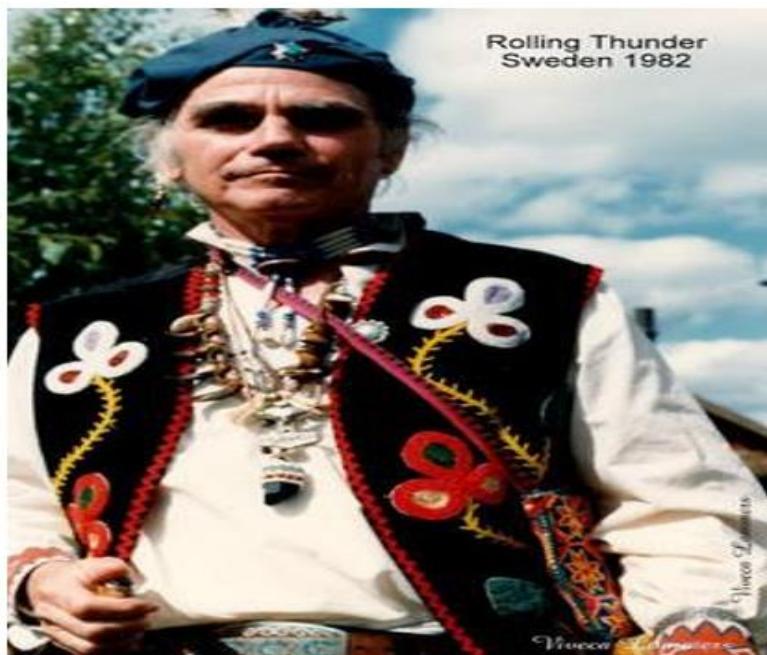
**Carlin, Nevada**

The city was named for Civil War general William Passmore Carlin. Its slogan is "Where the Train Stops... And the Gold Rush Begins."



**Union Pacific leaving Carlin**

Carlin was one of the most productive gold mining areas in the United States. The railways reached the present Carlin site in December of 1868. Today, the railway is still an important part of Carlin.



***John "Rolling Thunder" Pope***

Carlin was the home of Native American medicine man, John "Rolling Thunder" Pope (1916-1997), who had worked as a brakeman on the railway. Outside of work, Rolling Thunder devoted his energies to various inter-tribal unity efforts and Indian causes.

People from surrounding areas had to come to Elko for groceries and law advice. My mother worked as a legal secretary for Leo John Puccinelli, where he practiced law in Elko. He also served on the Nevada State Crime Commission.

"Rolling Thunder" (*R.T.*) would come for legal advice to Leo's office when he was opposing the Bureau of Land Management's systematic destruction of Pinyon trees on Shoshone Indian land. The B.L.M. were using massive chains, placed behind one bulldozer or between two bulldozers, to literally pull the trees, along with their roots, and all surrounding habitat, out of the ground. This practice is still going on today (2019) in Ely, Nevada.



**Bulldozer with chains**

During the time of the destruction of Pinyon trees on Shoshone Indian land. Rolling Thunder rescued two cat cubs. Their mother had been killed by the chains of the bulldozers. The cubs were brought to my mother's home. I was very young, but remember this through the eyes of a child.

I was sitting on a hardwood floor in our living room, when he (*Rolling Thunder*) came in with the cats. This man placed one down beside me, wrapped in a blanket. It was sound asleep. The other was making noise, so my mother held it. He went back outside. Then he came back in with some bags and a baby's bottle full of milk.

This man fed the cat as he talked with my mother. Soon as the cat was asleep, still sucking on the bottle, he then placed the cat's head in my little arms, in my lap, bottle and all.

He then said, "This is your relatives, they won't hurt you."

As a child I did not understand. All I knew was this cat was bigger than me and it was sucking on a bottle that I was holding. I watched as this man smoked a pipe, and soon after went around me and the cats in a circle saying things. At my age now, I know that he prayed for protection and other sacred things around me and the cats; for shortly after that my life and the cats' drastically changed.

The cats were taken to the San Diego Zoo where they were to live out their life; for they were too young to live in the wild.

The three things I remember the most about Elko was the cats, our babysitter's house and our 2 horses.

At the babysitter's house, my brothers, sister and I had each a sunflower that we would take care of everyday after our naps. We would wake up to the smell of cakes or cookies all through the house and I was very content.

I loved our 2 horses very much. We would get to ride them when my mother was not working. Their names were Samson & Goliath. We named them that because one was bigger than the other.



One day my world, as I had knew it in the early sixties, came crashing down and devastate my life. We moved to Texas, leaving everything I loved in Elko behind, never to see again.

My spirit was lost for many years, because of that experience. My roots had been cut off.

In the late sixties, mother sent us kids to Alabama, to see our "dad" for the summer. I was so excited because it was the first time that I ever knew I had a dad.

"Dad" works for the Burlington Northern Santa Fe (*BNSF*) railroad as a agent. He told us that he worked for the railroad in Elko and he transferred to here when he left our mother in Elko years ago.

The BNSF and Union Pacific have a duopoly on all trans-continental freight rail lines in the Western U.S. They share trackage rights over thousands of miles of track.

It was intriguing to watch all the trains come through but this one day a different looking train had stop at the depot. There was the main track that went straight through and had two switch tracks. The second track was for trains that had to wait for the oncoming train to pass before getting back on the tracks. The furthest track was for trains that would be staying here a few days, and this train was switching to that track. Thus, I knew everyone on that train would be staying across the street at the rail road hotel. It was not public, but had a restaurant and rooms. We were not allowed to go in there.

When my "dad" would go to work my stepmother would make us go outside and play. We really could go anywhere, for all we had around us was woods. The hotel was on the same side of the street, and about two blocks away was the only county store in the middle of nowhere.

The next day, after this train had got there, we were playing in the woods close to the hotel. We could see the front door open and this man came out and lit a pipe. The smell of tobacco made me think about when I was young, so I had to get closer as I came out of the woods.

This man said "Hi" to me and said who may you be? I told him my name, at the same time the others were coming out of the woods and telling me that I was going to be in trouble for speaking to a stranger.

The man said, "My name is John Pope and you can call me uncle." He told us some stories, and told us to come back the next day, and he would walk to the store with us to get ice cream.

We told this man that we could not do that, because we weren't supposed to be here. He looked at us and said, "You be here tomorrow, at this same time, and I will go tell your dad what I am doing."

We were excited! We did not get ice cream very often, and it seemed like tomorrow would never come.

We did get in trouble that night when dad came home from work, but he said we could go. He instructed us to come straight back home from the store, and if we didn't, we would get a whipping.

The next day was here. As we made our way to the hotel through the woods, "uncle" was waiting outside for us. He said, "Alright, let's go get us some ice cream."

As we were walking he stopped and touched plants. One plant he told us was "good medicine". We did not know what that meant back then but it was milk thistle.

When we made it to the store, he sat down on the steps to rest and I sat with him. He handed my oldest brother money and said, "You watch them in there. Get whatever ice cream you want, but get me two ice cream sandwiches." He looked down at me and said, "You will like it!"

As the others went in the store, he pulled out this stone from his pocket and said, "This is for you. This rock is very special. Just like you!" He showed me many things that were on this stone. He told me the story of where it had been. He told me to listen very careful to what he was saying even if I didn't understand. He said, "This is great medicine! It is called the stone of balance. One day you will teach and help heal all things. You will learn within yourself balance and how it works. You will teach it to others. Keep this on you at all times. That way you will never lose it."

This man further instructed, "When you find yourself sad or lonely, hold the stone, which I have done many times through my life; each time receiving more understanding and peace."

My brothers came out of the store and we all sat on the steps and ate our ice cream. Still to this day, I love ice cream sandwiches.

As we walked back, "uncle" told us that he would be leaving tomorrow and that he would not be coming back this way. While saying this, he reached down and held my hand.

We ask him "why?" He told us the railroad tracks were not the ones he rode on all the time. He said that he rode on Union Pacific. He said his train, was an older train. "That's why it looked so different than the other trains". It wasn't used anymore on the tracks. This was its last ride. They had to use these tracks because it was the shortest route to where it was going. It was going to a stock yard where other trains were, until it went to a museum.

The next morning, all of us sat on the hill and watched the train pulling out; waving as it left. "Uncle" was right. We never saw him again, but we never forgot him. Then it was time for us to go back to our mom. Our time watching the trains come and go came to an end.

I was sad; for I really liked being here. However, I had my stone, and it nurtured me through it.



In 1970s, my mother went out of town. When she returned, she came back with a hat. She told us kids, the love of her life gave it to her. It was a prop hat that was use in the movie, "Billy Jack".



***Billy Jack hat***

Mother stated that we were not allowed to touch it. Her request was for it to be buried with her when she crossed-over.

The first time I had ever touched the hat, was when I laid it beside my mother in 2011.

All through the years growing up, mother would watch the Billy Jack movies with us kids, telling us to pay attention to certain parts. Later in my years, I realize that these were pieces of my life puzzle I was putting together, not knowing that Rolling Thunder was in those movies until I was grown.



Around my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday we moved again. This time I was left all alone with one of my mother's training dogs, named "Shadow of my Smile". I just called him "Shadow".

Waiting for my mother to come back and get me, everyone else went with mother. I was left at the empty house with a birthday card, which had 5 dollars enclosed, and read, "God will hold you in the palm of his hands until we meet again."

When people around the area found out about this, I was put into foster care with nothing but my stone from my "uncle" and my birthday card. I have no idea what happened to Shadow.

I did not even know I was native until I was put into foster care. Because of my native status, my case was handle different then the other kids. To this day, I pray for all the lost children that have been removed from their roots, which has caused great separation in the universe.

I will not deny, at this point in my life, that this did not traumatize me; and for 28 years I had no idea where my family went.



After a year in the state foster care system, I was sent to the only "dad" I knew. I was so happy that I was going to where I'd be loved and wanted.

Six months later, I discovered that it was all a lie. I was sold at the age of 15 into an abusive marriage that lasted eight and a half years. I really truly believed that no one loved me.

It was after many years that went by, asking Creator, "Why was this happening in my life?", that I changed the question to "What can I learn from all of this?"

While questioning, I was holding my stone that "uncle" had passed on to me. This is when the truth from all the lies started coming out, and pieces started coming together.

My "dad" was dying; and he called me in two days before he crossed. He told me he was so sorry for all the things he did, and he didn't mean to hurt me throughout the years.

He asked me to sit down and then he turned my world upside down again.

"Dad" asked for my forgiveness. He said, "You got married because I did not want to raise you; only because I am not your father!"

"I will not tell you his (*my true dad's*) name; your mother should do that!"

"I will tell you that you met him once when you were visiting us. He rode a train because he worked on the railroad like me. We knew each other before I moved here."

"He lives in Carlin, Nevada, and is Native American; and this is all I can tell you. Your mother will have to tell you the rest."

I was in shock, and I really could not say much. My mind was going too fast. Then I said that I needed to go meet him. "Do you think he would see me?"

My heart hurt and was so heavy when I heard him say, "Honey, I'm so sorry but he passed away in 1997."

Two days after learning these things I buried the only "father" I knew, and I forgave him for everything. That was in 2004.



***"Nawassa Lightfoot" in 1961***

I did not have a good relationship with my mother. She lived in a different state than me, and I still had not cleared my emotions of her abandoning me when I was young.

I had no idea how to talk with my mother about my true father. My mother had many gifts. One was from the lightning people, where she could bring rain by calling the lightning.

As a young child I was so afraid of the things my mother could do, but I remember her calling the lightning, and within 5 minutes she would say, "There he is!" Then we would hear a big clap of thunder.

As a child I thought she was referring to "he" as the thunder; but now as a adult, I know she was talking about my father, Rolling Thunder, and calling on him.

I had so many emotions hitting me since my stepfather's funeral. I did not allow them to calm down before I called my mother.

As you can guess, things did not go well. We had words, and she said if I wanted any answers, I would have to find them out by myself. Then she hanged up on me.

I cried as my emotions were everywhere. I held my stone and prayed to the spirit world for help.



As life went on, my life calmed down. I was feeling much better and I had pushed my thoughts about who my father was away. I decided that I would not ever talk to my mother again.

It had been 7 months, and some of my friends that were not native invited me to go to a Pow Wow. I look back now and smile at how Spirit works to get things done.

I had never been to a Pow Wow, even though I was native. The minute I got on the grounds and heard the drums my body came alive and my heart skipped a beat. I knew I was with Creator and it was like being hugged. I had not felt like this ever in my life, and I knew I had found a part of myself.

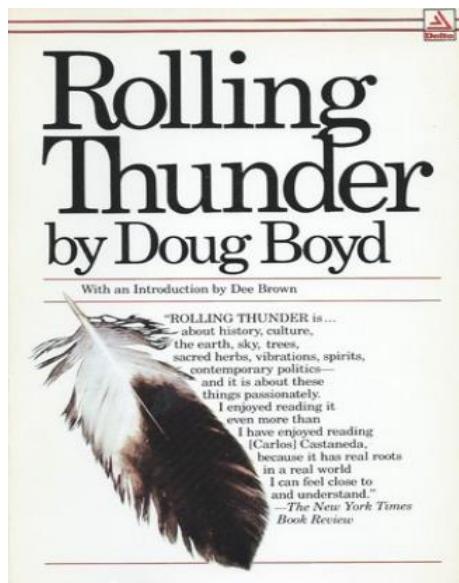
As I was walking and looking at things from canopy to canopy, I had walked by one particular canopy but did not go in. A woman looked at me and smiled. At that very moment, a book fell out of a basket of books that was sitting by the pole on the grass.

I bent down and picked it up and put it back in the basket, not even looking to see what it was and kept on walking. I stayed at the Pow Wow all day walking around, just looking and enjoying how I was feeling.

Every time I went past that woman's canopy, that book would fall to the ground and I would pick it up and put it back.

The third time I picked it up I said, "Hum?" and I looked at the name of the book and read the back of it; then put it back in the basket.

On the fourth time, when the book fell, the woman came out, picked it up and handed it to me. She said, "This book wants to go home with you. I've been watching each time you have come by. It has fallen out, so now it is a gift for you." She said "Many blessings!" as she handed the book to me.



***"Rolling Thunder"* by Doug Boyd**

I thanked her. As I started walking away, I looked again at the title of the book, which was "Rolling Thunder" by Doug Boyd.

At home I had but the book on my night stand by my bed and fell asleep. The next day I picked up the book to start reading it. On the very first page inside the cover, under the print, "Rolling Thunder..." was handwritten in pen. "I value your friendship. Stay happy! Love Barbara."

This scared me so bad that I put the book down. I did not touch it for months. My mind was full of thoughts running ninety miles a minute.

Did this book once belong to my mother? How did it get to that Pow Wow? It is four thousands and something miles to where my mother lives.

This scared me bad. You must understand, that at this time in my life, I did not know how Spirit works. It was over two years before I picked the book up again. I did start learning native ways and everything I learned brought me more alive. It felt like I was waking up from a long sleep.

One day I put in the movie "Billy Jack" and was watching it; still with no awareness that Rolling Thunder was in it, until the credits rolled. In awe of his name, I made the decision to pick the book back up.

I had many awe-inspiring moments while reading. It was as if, I was in the story.

The biggest "aha" moment was on page 28, when the book mentioned that Rolling Thunder's name, in English, was "John Pope".



***Train depot in Carlin, Nevada***

I knew that Rolling Thunder was the railroad man ("uncle") who had given me the stone that I have carried all these years.

***"This is great medicine! It is called the stone of balance. One day you will teach and help heal all things. You will learn within yourself balance and how it works. You will teach it to others. Keep this on you at all times. That way you will never lose it." -Rolling Thunder***

I cried! I did not know what to do with all this information, but my life puzzle was coming together piece by piece.



Then one day my mother called me. She was sick and had found out that she had breast cancer. She was "talking" to me, so I was not going to say or do anything to mess that up.

I was very sad for her. I decided to move to New Mexico and help her while she was sick. I wanted, and intuitively felt that I was ready, to have a relationship with her. I did not know that I would be clearing energy knots created by emotions from myself and my whole family's DNA. I had mastered some of my spiritual (*medicine*) gifts; moving, seeing and balancing energy was one of them.

I had been on this beautiful mountain for two weeks. It was 70 miles to the nearest town where you could get groceries; no cell service, no sirens. At night the sky was so clear you could reach up and touch it. This was because there were no street lights; it was breath taking.

My mom had surgery to remove her breast, and she was doing really well. Within a month my mother was back to herself and things were going well.

Then the other shoe fell and she was very mad at me. Yelling at me, she said, "I don't know why you ever came here." I said, "Because we need to fix the energy between us before you cross over; and heal, because I love you."

She made me leave her house that day and for three and a half years we did not speak. I stayed on a good path, and made a nonprofit where I worked with the state of Texas & New Mexico with children who got in trouble with the law, and were given a three month program instead of jail.

I taught "Circle Medicine", which is about energy and how to balance your physical, mental, emotional and spiritual self.

The program had such a good turnaround in the ones who had been in the program that the state of New Mexico asked me to work with people in recovery for drugs & alcohol; which I did. I had people from different states coming to the mountain to learn and heal.

My mother was not happy about all of this. Those years were very hard on me, for I had others who lived on the mountain telling me what my mother & brothers were saying about me to everyone.

One day I was asked, "Why did you run away, when you were little and broke your mother's heart?" I said, "I didn't run away!" In response, I was told, "That's what your mother told me."

I was upset, and so tired of all the untruths. I made up my mind that "today" the truth would be known. I grabbed my 13<sup>th</sup> birthday card (*yes, I still had it*) and Rolling Thunder's book, then headed to confront my mother.

I didn't know what would happen, or even if I could get in the house. The door was open so I just walked in. Mother started yelling "Get out!" and I said "No! We have to clear some things up."

She was really mad, but I asked her why was she was telling people that I ran away when I was young, when she knew that this was a lie.

I held up the 13<sup>th</sup> birthday card and said, "Remember.. this is the card you gave me that day with five dollars in it." My mother stopped yelling and sat down. Her face had lost all color and I told her that all these lies are going to stop. I said that I will copy this card and broadly post it on every tree, and the post office, so everyone can read the truth.

I declared, "We need to clear this now!" I also asked, "Who is my father?" My mother didn't say a word. She just sat there looking at me. I said never mind, I already know and I handed her the Doug Boyd, "Rolling Thunder" book.

If she had not been sitting down, I think she would have passed out, because of what little bit of color she had left in her.

I demanded that she open the book to the inside cover and look at it. When she did the book fell to the floor. She got up and went into the bathroom. She stayed in there a hour and forty five minutes. I think she was hoping that I would leave, but I was still there. When she came out, in a shaky voice, she said, "I told you.. You would have to find this out on your own, and I see that you have. Now get out!"

I left. I stayed on the mountain for seven years. A month before my mother crossed we worked out many things, and I laid my mother to rest with forgiveness & love.



Several years after leaving the mountain my friends Elisabeth & Bill invited me to come to Washington State for a visit. When I got there, they took me on a trip to Oregon to meet Mala Spotted Eagle, Rolling Thunder's son.

I was very nervous to meet my half-brother, and wondered what he would think.

We met at a restaurant, had dinner and talked. Mala told me that there had been a few people who had come to him in the past; saying that Rolling Thunder was their father. He said that he knew what they were saying wasn't true.

Mala said that his family kept asking him why he was wasting his time, but he said Spirit told him to come to the restaurant today, so he was here.

I brought some gifts for him; Mescalero Apache feathers and a beaded hair barrette for his wife, Sky Sparrow, which I had got when I lived in New Mexico.

I told him that I was not here to cause any problems. I was trying to find my roots.

We talked about many things. I ask him if he knew where the cat cubs went after his dad found them. He said, "No." He had always wondered what happened to them. I told him! "They went to the San Diego Zoo."

I told him about our two horses Samson & Goliath, and I did not know where they went when we moved. Mala said, "That's funny.. because one day I woke up and we had two horses in our back yard.

We talked about the Billy Jack movies.

That day I found myself coming together, and I was not in pieces anymore. It was a great feeling!



***ShaHaWin & Mala Spotted Eagle***

As the day came to a end, Mala and I took a picture together and said our goodbyes.

Elisabeth & Bill kept telling me how amazed they were, because me and my step-brother, Mala, looked a lot alike.

I did not realize that until I looked at the picture, and we did have similar features.

That day I found my roots! I could stand without feeling lost. It healed me!



It is not for personal claim or vanity that I tell my story. I'm not saying that "I am this" or "I am that"

**Each of us has a thread in the web of life, and it is threaded by things that you do and other's do to you.**

**I have removed and cut out all the lies and have replaced them with the truth, which start at the roots, so now I can stand tall & strong. I have a purpose here on Mother Earth, as we all do. To respect all things! To honor all things! To be a teacher! To be a student! To give unto others! Show unconditional love!**

**Everything you do sends out energy waves that affect others around you. That is why it is so important to walk softly on Mother Earth in love.**

I will honor my father & mother for the things I have learned. I gain my spiritual freedom by carrying the stone of balance. Now, I show others how to undo their energy knots to free their self.

What is an energy knot? Anything that is negative, like fear, lies, anger, hatred, judgement, sadness, etc.

It starts in your emotional self, and filters through the other aspects of yourself until it makes you sick.

You get sick so that you can start looking for ways to heal yourself.

You really can heal yourself and set yourself free. We live in free will, so only you can choose.

Rolling Thunder said, "Love the earth, treat it gently, and it will reward you."

It's difficult for a healer. We all have to learn to guard every thought, every word and every feeling.



***Water is life***

Our race is just one more element in nature. We have no right to dirty up the planet with our trash. Therefore, the cleansing of the earth, as you can see, starts with the cleansing of our minds.

We'll have to clean up our own spirits before we can start cleaning up this land. Aho!

-ShaHaWin Lightfoot